



## Forward Thinking

Extending thanks to GPTC heroes



‘THANK YOU’ to everyone in the GPTC Family for making the best of difficult times in the midst of the current, global pandemic. The College extends its gratitude for the dedicated years of service of two departing Local Board members, Ms. Sadie Dennard (previous Board Chair) and Dr. Thomas Coleman (previous Vice Chair). They have served the College well and will be dearly missed. We also welcome four new Local Board Members to include Dr. Scott Andrews, Covington City Manager; Ms. Sonja Brown, Assistant Director of Community Affairs, Stone Mountain Judicial Circuit; Mr. Dorian DeBarr, Interim President of Decide DeKalb Development Authority; and Ms. Toni Hannah, Area Manager, Georgia Power (DeKalb and Rockdale counties).

While the majority of us have maintained a limited presence on campus during the health crisis, our Campus Police have continued to keep our campuses safe and secure. They have delivered masks, respirators, and other PPE to various locations around the state. And, they have taken the lead role in facilitating our contact tracing and reporting functions related to COVID-19. Please be intentional to show our heroes your appreciation as you encounter them around campus.

- Tavaraz Holston, President

## International student named 2020 EAGLE delegate



**A BETTER LIFE** Earlier this year, Ruth Michael, 2020 EAGLE delegate for GPTC, competed state-wide with seven other delegates for the top spot. She immigrated to the U.S. in search for a better life for herself and her family.

By Justin Clay

*If there is no struggle, there is no progress* — social reformer Frederick Douglas once said. For Georgia Piedmont Technical College (GPTC) Business Administration program student and 2020 EAGLE delegate Ruth Michael, the struggle was exactly what set her future goals into motion.

“I came to the United States from East Africa, which is Eritrea, in 2004, searching for a new life,” Michael said, “and a higher education.”

Michael arrived in the United States without a high school diploma, which she was unable to obtain due to the Ethiopian and Eritrean War. And that was exactly where Michael knew she needed to start.

“I heard from my community that the Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG) and GPTC offered courses to earn a GED,” she said. “So, in 2017, I set my sights on earning a GED, which would allow me employment and continue pursuing my goal.”

In Spring 2020, Michael was named GPTC’s EAGLE (Exceptional Adult Georgian in Literacy Education) delegate of the year, a prestigious award recognized by TCSG, later delayed by the novel Coronavirus COVID-19.

“It was such a great honor to be nominated as the GPTC 2020 EAGLE delegate,” she said. “At first, I was surprised, but later on I realized how much of an honor it was.”

As an immigrant, Michael was faced with obstacles to her success. “Although it was hard from the start [and] many of challenges with the language barrier and the culture made it difficult to come to this point where people are acknowledging my accomplishments...it was just like a light for me.”

Michael became the top Adult Education/ GED program graduate for the 2019-2020 year and works part time in the Adult Education department. Additionally, Michael is the treasurer for the Student Government Association (SGA) and participates in SkillsUSA. “I wanted to be an advocate and encourage others,” Michael said. “Going through [my struggles were] hard, but if I didn’t, I wouldn’t know how to help other students.”

“I believe that they trust me as they saw the challenges I overcame,” she continued. “Therefore, I want other students to be inspired to change their path as I did and pursue their goals. Success is always a process; so, take risks and never give up.”

### GPTC provides financial lifejackets where it counts



Contributed by Cory Thompson

One of the many hallmarks of technical education is graduating debt free or with little debt. While we offer a world-class education at a bargain price, financing an education can be a daunting, and sometimes prohibitive, task for many of our students. But the Georgia Piedmont Technical College Foundation can often provide a financial lifejacket when students are just shy of meeting their obligation to the College.

For Fall Semester 2020, the Foundation was able to offer scholarships to 16 students, totaling more than \$11,000. This is due in large part to employee payroll dedication that comes to the Foundation. Faculty and staff donations help with purge relief as well. Through a partnership between employee and community giving, the GPTC Foundation was able to work with Student Affairs and Financial Aid to protect dozens of students from being dropped from their classes.

With Spring term quickly approaching, be on the lookout for details on which scholarships will be available to students. The scholarship application period for Spring will be October 25 – November 30.

### GPTC and DeKalb Chamber support \$145,000 grant



By Justin Clay

In the turbulent time of COVID-19, small businesses have faced nearly insurmountable challenges. Georgia Piedmont Technical College’s Economic Development Division partnered with the DeKalb Chamber of Commerce to establish a \$145,000 grant, aimed at assisting these businesses.

“[We are] excited to offer training and industry recognized credentials to small business owners through the DeKalb County Better Business Loan program,” GPTC Business and Industry Coordinator Kelly Pollard said. “The training program includes the tools needed to sustain and grow their businesses.”

The program is comprised of self-paced, online learning modules, which are all conveniently accessible at any time. For more information about this program, please visit <https://bit.ly/30nhXyB>, call Kelly Pollard, 404-297-9522, ext. 1230 or email [gometrocorporatcollege@gptc.edu](mailto:gometrocorporatcollege@gptc.edu).

### Congressman partners with GPTC in upcoming job fair



Congressman Jody Hice represents the 10th District of Ga.

By Jana Wiggins

U.S. Congressman Jody Hice (GA-10) lends his support to the newest online event — the Fall 2020 Regional+ Virtual Job Fair, set for Oct. 9 from 12 – 4 p.m. Hice joins GPTC, the Newton County Industrial Development Authority, the Covington-Newton County Chamber of Commerce and the Development Authority of Walton County to encourage job growth in the region. This is the third consecutive year the congressman has participated in this hiring event.

“If you’re a company looking to hire or an individual searching for a job, mark your calendars for Oct. 9 and join me for this can’t-miss virtual event,” Representative Hice said.

For the full press release, please visit [gptc.edu](http://gptc.edu) at <https://bit.ly/2ENZ8gi>. To learn more and register for the upcoming virtual job fair, visit [www.careereco.com/events/GeorgiaPiedmont](http://www.careereco.com/events/GeorgiaPiedmont).

### UPCOMING EVENTS

- **Regional + Virtual Job Fair with Rep. Jody Hice / Oct. 9**  
12-4 PM
- **PinkBQ / Oct. 21 & 22**  
Oct. 21, DeKalb (11:30 AM – 1:30 PM & 5 - 6:30 PM)  
Oct. 22, Newton D (11:30 AM – 1:30 PM)
- **Halloween Night at the Drive-in Movies / Oct. 29**  
Starts at 7:30 PM. Feature film to be announced soon.

## Newton Co. deputy succeeds with GPTC



Deputy Christopher Lachenmayer with GPTC President Holston

Contributed by Deputy Lachenmayer

In January of 2018, I retired from the U.S. Army after a 21-year career. I wasn’t positive what direction the rest of my life would take or what my next steps should be. While transitioning out of active duty service, my Soldier For Life counselors put me in contact with Major Harry McCann [at GPTC]. MAJ McCann explained the Basic Mandate program offered at GPTC’s Law Enforcement Academy (LEA) and helped me to make the informed decision to enroll in the

January 2018 academy class.

What really interested me about the academy was the knowledge that the courses and instruction I would receive could transfer over and be applied to an associate degree through the college. I graduated from the LEA in April 2018 and immediately enrolled in resident classes at the GPTC DeKalb campus. After four semesters, I was awarded an associate degree in Applied Criminal Justice in August 2019.

Currently, I serve part-time as a Deputy

Sheriff with the Newton County Sheriff’s Office. In my experience, deputies and officers who completed Basic Mandate certification at GPTC are viewed with a little more reverence than those who receive their training elsewhere.

My thanks and gratitude to all the faculty and staff at GPTC. I pray for and encourage every student as they strive to achieve their goals, and I hope to serve as an example of the success that can be realized by experiencing education with GPTC.

## Hotseat with André David: Business Administration & Technology Instructor



N. André David

### Going Above & Beyond

[Mr. David] joined the college early this year. Since his arrival, he has demonstrated an innovative approach to assisting students during the pandemic. In addition, he has shared numerous resources with his colleagues to assist them during this time. He is truly passionate and excited about being a part of GPTC.

- Cheree Williams, EdD, Executive Vice President

### Favorite part of your job?

Engaging with my students and watching them evolve/grasp/apply the concepts.

### Advice that you give to students?

Never give up learning, growing and setting goals.

### Favorite food?

An Amerindian dish called Pepperpot

### Your go-to movie?

Scarface

### Favorite quote?

Something my father said to me: A person can only do to you what you let them do to you!

### Favorite memory?

My paternal grandmother consoling me as I laid on the floor when I was eight. I fell asleep crying in her arms. When I woke up she wasn’t there. Years later I found out she had a stroke but took the time to console me. Her actions showed me unconditional love and to always keep pushing regardless of my circumstances.

